

A
TRUE NARRATIVE
OF A
Wonderful Accident,
Which occur'd upon the Execution of a
CHRISTIAN SLAVE
AT
Aleppo in Turkey.

BEING

A Remarkable Instance of Divine Providence, attesting the acceptableness of the *Christian Religion*, and the Virtue of Chastity to Almighty God.

Written at first for the Satisfaction of a Friend only ; and since made publick for the strengthening of Virtue.

This may be Printed.
May 12. 1676.

Ro. L'Estrange.

L O N D O N,

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THE AFRICAN

OF THE AMERICAN

CHRISTIANITY

as combined
with the
theology of

the African
theology of

the African
theology of

the African
theology of

*A True Narrative of a Wonderful Accident, which
occur'd upon the Execution of a Christian Slave at
Aleppo in Turkey.*

S I R,

THough I am none of those men of easie Faith, which (either through want of Capacity to judge of, or want of due Industry to inquire into things) are apt to credit all Reports: and though possibly there are few men have a greater aversion to encourage Superstition than I have; Yet I confess I do not think my self oblig'd to deny my assent to those things my senses inform me of; though I cannot presently satisfy my self of the true causes which produce their *Phænomena*, or appearances: for I have learn'd to know thus much, That there are many things we know not: And for my part, I look upon that man as a very false conceited person, that dare deny matter of fact, only because he is unacquainted with the causes from whence such or such an effect is produced.

Nay, I will go yet farther, and venture to say, That if I receive a relation of a thing from a Person, or Persons, of whose Candor and Truth I have no reason to doubt; and if I am fully satisfied (upon a wary inspection) that such a worthy Person can have no interest to lead him to impose upon me: And if the same thing, with the same Circumstances, be attested to me by many such free and uninterested Persons, and that at several times, and unknowing to each other, and all this without the least variation: I then conceive I have the greatest humane probability imaginable for the giving an Historical Faith to such a thing.

And this security any man may have (if he question the truth of the succeeding Relation) by going to *Elford's Coffee-House* in *George-yard* in *Lombard-street*, where he may meet with several Eminent and Worthy Gentlemen (*Turky-Merchants*), that can confirm the truth of the thing, they having

been at the place where this was acted, and at the same time when it was done.

I make this Apology, because the Reader may satisfy himself of the truth of the ensuing Story, and not be apt to think he is imposed upon by the Authors of the *Island of Pines*, or *O Brazil*.

Some few years since, there happened an Insurrection or Tumult of some of the *Turks* which dwelt in the City of *Aleppo*; which being easily suppressed, the *Grand Seignior* nevertheless sent thither a *Bashaw* to enquire out the Malefactors, and see justice done upon them: in the Execution of which, the *Turks* are very severe (the Constitution of their Government obliging them to be so). Upon the approach of the *Bashaw*, all the *Turks* of quality in *Aleppo* went out some Leagues or Miles to reverence the *Bashaw*, and conduct him in triumphant manner to the City: And upon this occasion they were attended by the greatest part of their Slaves, the better to express their Grandeur and Quality.

Upon this Affair it was, That the House of one of the most magnificent *Turks* of that City, was left that day without any other Person in it, but only the *Turks* Steward, and a handsome *French Slave*, a young man of eighteen years old: This *Turk's* Steward, being much addicted to that horrid and unnatural sin (too frequent with the *Mahumetans*) *Sodomy*; and having cast his lustful Eyes upon this Youth, and considered the fitness of the time (the House being empty) to act his Villanous design: He had in pursuance of his intent, got this *Slave* into a Chamber; where having locked the Door upon him, to hinder his making an Escape, He at first began to make promises, and to flatter the *Slave*, if by that means possibly he might prevail with him to consent to his (more than Brutish) Devillish desires: but finding the *Slave* of a settled and severe Virtue, he quickly perceived there was no hopes of accomplishing his hellish Desires that way, and therefore had took up a resolution to pollute the chaste Youth by force; when the *Slave* perceived this, he begg'd, he pray'd, he demonstrated the impossibility of his assenting to such a Crime: But all this made no other impressions upon the vile *Turk*, but to add passion and

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and Fury to his Lust: insomuch, that he swore deeply, he would give him immediate Death, if he disputed any longer; and did not presently submit to his accursed Will. The virtuous *Slave* abhorring this baseness with all his Soul, and finding himself destitute of all other Remedies, nimbly seized upon a Cymeter which hung upon the wall of the Chamber, and at one blow with it, smote off the Turks head.

It is not easie for any one who is unacquainted with the Cruel and Tyrannical nature of the Turks, to make a true estimate of the miserable and deplorable Condition this accident had put this Generous *Slave* into: Death was the least thing he could expect (and I believe the least thing he feared): for it is very usual with the Turks, upon much slighter faults (than this seemed to be in their esteem) to devise long-lasting and inexpressive Torments to inflict upon their Slaves: which being foreseen by this unfortunate Youth, he immediately cast about by what means to make his escape; he had heard that threescore Miles distance from *Aleppo*, there was another English Factory (of *Turky Merchants*) call'd *Scanderoon*; whither, if it were possible for him to get, he rationally suppos'd that he might be secur'd; and by being put aboard an English Vessel, be by that means carried out of the *Turks Dominions*.

To accomplish this, he went to his Master's Stable, where finding an *Arabian Horse*, he presently mounted the back of him, and convey'd himself out of the City: which was not difficult for him to do at that time, the place being empty of people upon the foresaid occasion. But he being totally ignorant of the way he was to take, (having never been permitted all the time of his abode there to go out of the City) and not daring to enquire it for fear of betraying himself: by a Caprice of ill Fortune, he happened to go the very same Road that his Master and the other Citizens of *Aleppo* (attending upon the *Bashaw*) were returning homeward by. His Master and he were both surpris'd at the sight of each other: and the Turk hastily demanding the occasion of his coming thither (whether it were the surpris'd, and fear he was in, or his modesty which might make him loath to discover (before so much company) the truth of that shame-

ful attempt upon him, which caused him to make an escape I know not; so it was, that) he answer'd his Master, That Thieves had broken into his House and kill'd his Steward, and that he having got out of a Window, had run to the Stable, and mounted that Horse to come and give him notice.

The Turk seem'd to be satisfied with this account at present, and commanded the Slave to joyn the Troop of those which were upon their return to the City: which he was necessitated to do.

When they were come to *Aleppo*, the cunning Turk examin'd his House, and found indeed his Steward kill'd, but when he perceived nothing was taken out of the House, he presently concluded no Thieves had been there: and therefore charg'd the *French* Slave with the death of his Steward, which he frankly confess'd, with a full account of what you have heard.

The Turk then carried this Slave before the *Bashaw*, desiring justice might be done upon him for the death of his Steward: But when the *Bashaw* had carefully examined the matter, he was convinced of the truth of the Slaves relation; and being willing to deter the Turks from that base sin of *Sodomy*, he acquitted the Youth of punishment. But the Turks being unsatisfied with this Sentence, apply themselves again, and in a body, to the *Bashaw*, demonstrating the ill consequences of his merciful Sentence, and the unsecure estate it would reduce them all to, in giving encouragement to their Slaves to murder them: And begging, That though it were true which the Slave alledged, (which yet they deny'd, averring he murder'd the Steward only that he might make his escape) that the Slave might be executed for an Example to others, which upon their importunity was at last granted them by the *Bashaw*; and his former merciful Sentence revoked: but yet he would not suffer him to have any other death than beheading.

The Slave then was brought to the place of Execution (which is a Field without the City); where being come, he appeared, though very modest, yet undaunted, and fearless of Death. And having pray'd with much fervour and devotion, and having particularly acknowledg'd his fault, and begg'd

begg' Almighty Gods pardon for telling his Master that passage (about robbing his House) when he met him upon the Road; he was strip'd stark naked (according to the custom of that place) and discovered a lovely body, in which inhabited a more lovely Soul. And immediately before his death he did aver, That he died a Christian, depending wholly for his Salvation upon the merits of our Saviour; and that he kill'd the Steward for no other reason but to avoid being polluted by him; and that he hoped God would shew some sign upon his Body to attest his Innocency, and the truth of what he said. After having said this, his Head was struck off by the Executioner, and his Body and Head left in the Field unburied, according to the custom of the place.

It happened that there were executed at the same time, and in the same place, several rebellious Turks, whose Bodies were quickly torn in pieces, and devour'd by a certain sort of great Dogs, kept there at Aleppo, who are allow'd almost no other sustenance but the Carcasses of Malefactors. But it was observ'd, that none of these Dogs would touch the Body or Head of this *Martyr of Chastity*.

It may be here objected, That this was a meer Accident, and that the Dogs bellies being fill'd, and satiated with eating the Carcasses of the other Malefactors, they forbore to touch this Youth for that cause, and no other.

To which I answer, That it was observ'd, first, That the Body of this Young man lay in the Field unburied, for the space of ten or twelve days, in all which time there was no other Executions; and the Dogs were so extreemly pinch'd with hunger, that they were ready to devour living men, who had much difficulty to keep themselves from being attack'd by them; and yet would they not touch this Carcass.

Secondly, It is remarkable, That the Body of this Young man remain'd all this time expos'd to the heat of the Sun, (which in that Climate is very intemperate), and yet it did neither stink, corrupt, nor (which is somewhat odd) did it change its colour, but remain'd as fresh and vivid, as if he had been but asleep.

Some may, to solve this, and take off the wonder, say, This proceeded from a peculiar and Balsamick constitution of
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of Body; But supposing this, The Youth was plump, juicy, of a good habit of Body, and what then should hinder the Dogs to feed upon him, when they were press'd by extreme Hunger? And this Circumstance is very well worth our Remark, That after ten days, there being another Execution in the same place, That Carcass was immediately devour'd in the sight of the People.

I will not stily affirm all this is Miraculous; though I know Gods hand is not shorten'd: and though he seldom stops or turns the course of Nature, yet he can do it when he pleaseth: And upon this occasion, here was a considerable Motive for God to exert His power, to illustrate the Innocency and Virtue of a devout and Chast Christian, and that in a place where the Enemies of Christ Reign, and despise his Doctrine, and persecute the Professors of it. But Preaching being none of my employment, I shall forbear, and leave every man to abound in his own sense.

I will end this Discourse with only saying this, What Sentiments some Christians may have upon reading this History, I know not; but this I am assur'd of, That the sight of the thing was so convincive and operative upon the Turks, That to bury their shame, they were necessitated at last to dig a Grave, and intomb this Chast Martyr.

I have now in compliance to your desires committed the true Narrative of this History into your hands, which you are permitted to dispose of as you think fit.

FINIS.

Secondly, it is remarkable, That the Body of this Young man remained all this time exposed to the heat of the sun (which in that Climate is very intemperate), and yet it did not corrupt (which is somewhat odd) but remained as fresh and as it had been but a few days.

Some may to solve this and take off the wonder, say, This proceeded from a peculiar and Balsamick constitution of

